Course Learning Outcomes for Unit VII

Upon completion of this unit, students should be able to:

7. Construct a rationale for designing training for leadership competencies.
   7.1 Discuss the leadership development strategy for a company.
   7.2 Explain assessment tools for identifying leadership capabilities.
   7.3 Discuss benefits of formal leadership development programs.

Required Unit Resources

In order to access the following resources, click the links below.

Jenkins, D. M., & Allen, S. J. (2017, Winter). Aligning instructional strategies with learning outcomes and leadership competencies. *New Directions for Student Leadership, 2017*(156), 43–58. https://libraryresources.columbiasouthern.edu/login?url=http://search.ebscohost.com/login.aspx?direct=true&db=a9h&AN=126316404&site=ehost-live&scope=site

Leonard, H. S. (2017). A teachable approach to leadership. *Consulting Psychology Journal: Practice and Research, 69*(4), 243–266. https://libraryresources.columbiasouthern.edu/login?url=http://search.ebscohost.com/login.aspx?direct=true&db=bsu&AN=128817733&site=ehost-live&scope=site

Unit Lesson

Introduction

In this unit, we will explore the human resource role in leadership development, assessing leadership development needs, identifying competency gaps, and examine the assessment tools and strategies that can be utilized. This unit will take an in-depth look at training and leadership development.

Leader Development

The ability of an individual to influence a group or another individual toward the achievement of goals and results is considered *leadership* (Society for Human Resource Management [SHRM], 2017). In an organization's hierarchy, leadership is not specifically attached to a certain position but, rather, can evolve from opportunities and situations. Also, when considering the subject of leadership in a global context, it should not be confused with the status, power, or some official authority. The ability to influence across cultures must be present among global leaders. Hence, it is important that leadership development practices be geared toward preparing and training leaders to lead in a global economy.

Today we see a global leadership environment across many industries. (Rawpixelimages, n.d.)

Cultural considerations are vitally important in developing a leadership plan for today's global environment. Leader development refers to an organization's training and professional development program, which is targeted to assist management and executive-level employees in developing the flexibility, ability, and skills required to deal with a variety of situations (SHRM, 2017). In this unit, we will explore the role that human resources (HR) has in leadership development through the training and development function. We will also explore assessment tools for developing leaders, and lastly, we will examine various leadership development methodologies.

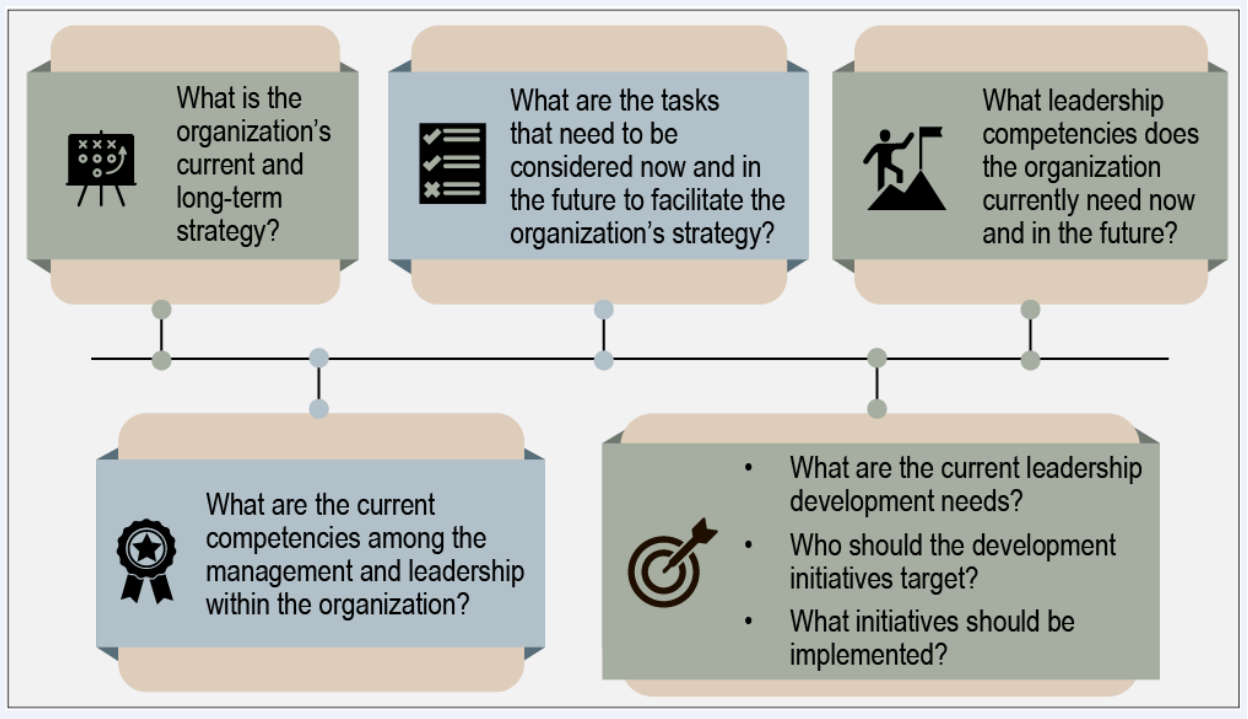
HR's Role in Leadership Development

According to Giles (2016), HR plays a dual function when it comes to leadership development. The first function is that of a leader. HR professionals must consider their own role as leaders and the responsibilities that come with it. Often, through various functions (e.g., training and development, organizational change management), HR professionals are in a position that requires them to bring about change that is necessary to keep the organization competitive and successful.

In addition, HR is responsible for identifying other leaders and potential leaders in the organization to maximize leadership succession planning efforts. Therefore, HR professionals must assess the organization's leaders and their leadership needs on a regular basis. These needs must also be aligned with the organization's strategic goals. HR is also responsible for providing leaders and potential leaders with adequate developmental experiences, relationships, and training needed for the continuation of development.

Assessing Leadership Development Needs

The training professional must begin looking at current leaders in relation to the organization's goals and strategies when assessing leadership development needs (Scisco et al., 2017). Some of the things to consider when analyzing leadership development needs include:


What is the organization's current and long-term strategy?
What are the tasks that need to be considered now and in the future to facilitate the organization's strategy?
What leadership competencies does the organization currently need now and in the future?
What are the current competencies among the management and leadership within the organization?
What are the current leadership development needs?
Who should the development initiatives target?
What initiatives should be implemented?

Most jobs, depending on the type and complexity, require a specific set of knowledge and skills. *Competency mapping* is often used for leadership or other positions to identify key competencies for a particular position. These competencies can be tied to behaviors and personal skills that distinguish excellent performance from the average. The competencies can be used in training and development, recruitment, performance management, succession planning, job evaluation, and many other aspects of the employees' work.

A competency assessment is typically a result of the key competencies formed during the mapping process. The competency assessment identifies the skill gaps against those specific competencies that the organization considers important. There are some organizations that may have their own competency assessments. However, many consultants and vendors offer competency assessment tools in various formats.

An important aspect of performance management within leadership is the coaching and developing of skills needed to be successful (Fernandez-Araoz et al., 2017). The results from a competency assessment reveal how well a candidate or employee may perform the required skills needed for the job in relation to its performance standards. Competency assessments also provide the foundation of an individual development plan (IDP) and identify the necessary training and development programs needed to cultivate the skills and abilities needed to perform well. If you recall, the use of IDPs was discussed in an earlier unit.

Assessment Tools for Leadership Development

Some of the tools that organizations use to assess leadership ability include work sample measures. *Work sample measures* are assessment tools that require candidates to demonstrate levels of attained leadership proficiencies. These work samples include situation judgment tests (SJTs), simulations, and assessment centers.

- *Situational judgment tests (SJTs)*: Prospective leaders are presented with sample situations and problems that they may encounter in a work environment along with the probable answers. Candidates are asked to place the answers in order from best to worst, choose the best and worst answers, or just provide the best answer to the given situation.
- *Assessment centers and simulations*: These are very similar to SJTs in that they can provide a candidate with a wide range of problem-solving exercises and leadership scenarios. These exercises or scenarios could include financial or business data analysis, leaderless group discussions, in-basket tests, role plays, and interview simulations. The series of exercises are observed by multiple

raters who give an evaluation on each of the targeted performance factors. Then, assessors collect their results to provide an overall assessment score.

Though these methods have proven to be highly successful, some methods have shown to be more useful than others (SHRM, 2017). For example, SJTs, work sample tests, and other tools that require demonstrations of leadership have high validity. However, they can also be very expensive in terms of design, development, and delivery.

Emotional Intelligence Assessment Tools

Emotional intelligence (EI) is the ability to competently handle interpersonal relationships along with being aware of and in complete control of one's emotions (SHRM, 2017). Many organizations are looking for leaders who possess strong EI. EI assessment tools are a good way to identify the EI competency within a leader. EI assessment tools come in many shapes and sizes. There are some that are used for hiring, spotting high-potential candidates, coaching, and assessing performance feedback. Many of the EI assessment tools currently found in the open market have not been empirically evaluated (Giles, 2016). The three empirically evaluated EI assessment tools that have been identified in at least five published journal articles or book chapters with some empirical data to back their validity are BarOn Emotional Quotient Inventory, Emotional and Social Competence Inventory, and Genos Emotional Intelligence Inventory.

For more information on additional empirically validated EI assessments, please consult the *Consortium for Research on Emotional Intelligence in Organizations* website.

Leader Development Strategies

Many organizations take a formal approach when designing developmental opportunities for leaders. This approach requires organizational discipline, design, implementation, and sustenance to keep the program running. Utilizing this approach can be very successful in shielding the organization from succession surprises and can also be a competitive advantage in a number of other ways.

- A system-wide approach on leadership development can help build leadership capacity throughout the organization.
- Initiatives in leadership development should align in all levels of the organization and provide a clear path of the skills and competencies needed to be developed from one level to the next.
- Each manager should have an IDP where they are held accountable for making yearly progress.
- Leadership development should be integrated into the ongoing work-related experience.

Leader Development Methods

Below you will find a list of effective leadership development methods commonly used in organizations today.

Challenging assignments: Individuals develop leadership capacity by being exposed to a variety of experiences that test and expand their abilities to handle a number of issues and scenarios. Scisco et al. (2017) mention how research has validated that high-performing employees tend to perform at their peak within 2 years of being in a new assignment and that performance declines after that if the individual is not given new and more challenging assignments. Often, leadership skills do not materialize until an individual is moved out of his or her comfort zone. Assigning high-performing individuals challenging assignments that are outside of their expertise will force them to identify collaborative resources and figure out on their own what they need to do to succeed.

Risk management: With the exposure of more challenging assignments for the employee, the risk of failure substantially increases. Hence, there should be appropriate support given to the employee to minimize risk. This can come in the form of training, mentoring, coaching, and other forms of support. At the same time, this should be balanced by monitoring the amount of support given because too much support may compromise the value of the experience and keep the employee from developing core leadership competencies such as problem-solving and drawing on his or her own resources.

Real-life problem-solving in a controlled environment: Some organizations use real-life situations to help leaders develop the core competencies for which they are searching (e.g., handling a real business mistake

or crisis that is actually happening within the organization). This is typically done in a controlled environment, such as a leadership development center or in a special taskforce, which allows the organization to manage the risk and have some control over the situation.

Training: Often, organizations use formal training to help leaders develop the competencies they need to be successful in their roles. The training is typically done at a time when the leader may need to know something in order to achieve a specific result and has the opportunity to use the new knowledge in a real-life situation. This is where training becomes most effective in developing leadership competencies. Examples of this leadership methodology are workshops, seminars, or classes.

Training and leadership development are important topics in any organization. Organizations today must have leaders who are prepared to lead in a global environment. Selecting the right leadership development methods is key to success.

References

Fernandez-Araoz, C., Roscoe, A., & Aramaki, K. (2017, November-December). Turning potential into success: The missing link in leadership development. *Harvard Business Review, 95*(6), 86. http://search.ebscohost.com.libraryresources.columbiasouthern.edu/login.aspx?direct=true&db=edsgao&AN=edsgcl.513826863&site=eds-live&scope=site

Giles, S. (2016). *Developing organizational leaders*. Society for Human Resource Management. https://www.shrm.org/resourcesandtools/tools-and-samples/toolkits/pages/developingorganizationalleaders.aspx

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Scisco, P., Biech, E., & Hallenbeck, G. (2017). *Compass: Your guide for leadership development and coaching*. Center for Creative Leadership.

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